

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 OES-04 AID-05 IGA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

SP-02 PM-03 NSC-05 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /074 W

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R 141556Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2300

UNCLAS PANAMA 6546

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: SEA-LEVEL CANAL ALTERNATIVES STUDY

1. THE UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA STUDY OF THE SEA-LEVEL CANAL ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO PANAMA, ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED IN JUNE AND PRESENTLY UNDERWAY, WILL BE FINANCED THROUGH A LOAN FROM THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING'S PRE-INVESTMENT FUND. IN A TWO STEP OPERATION ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 13, THE PLANNING MINISTRY (1) LOANED THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS-THE PROJECT'S SPONSOR--THE NECESSARY FUND (\$53,250), AND (2) THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FORMALLY CONTRACTED WITH THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE STUDY.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE UNIVERSITY'S STUDY IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT BY THE 1990'S THE PRESENT LOCK CANAL WILL NO LONGER BE ADEQUATE TO ACCOMODATE THE PROJECTED NUMBER OF TRANSITS. AMONG THE QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED ARE (1) THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF A SEA LEVEL CANAL ON PANAMA'S ECONOMY, (2) AN EVALUATION OF THE ADVANTAGES AND COSTS OF THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR A SEA-LEVEL CANAL, (3) A COMPARISON WITH THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE EXISTING CANAL, AND (4) DEFINITION OF THE "POLITICAL-ECONOMIC" FEATURES REGARDING EXPLOITATION OF THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SEA-LEVEL CANAL.

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3. WHILE THE FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT MADE NO MENTION

OF THE PROJECT'S ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE, THE ORIGINAL
SCHEDULE CALLED FOR THE STUDY TO BE READY BY THE FIRST
OF THE YEAR. BOTH THE INITIAL AND PRESENT ANNOUNCEMENTS
STRESSED THAT THE STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS WERE SOUGHT
IN CONNECTION WITH THEA:7443,5 543-56 ,3&958-589, .
JORDEN

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Disposition Event:
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